

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PLEDGING CONFERENCE FOR WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, RECEIVES
\$523 MILLION IN PLEDGES FOR 1977-1978

1. SUMMARY: FORTY-THREE GOVERNMENTS ANNOUNCED CONTRIBUTIONS
IN CASH, COMMODITIES AND SERVICES TOTALLING THE EQUIVALENT
OF APPROXIMATELY \$523 MILLION ON FEBRUARY 4 AT THE 1976
PLEDGING CONFERENCE OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP). THE
SIX LARGEST CONTRIBUTIONS ANNOUNCED WERE FROM THE UNITED
STATES, \$188 MILLION, CANADA, \$150 MILLION, SAUDI ARABIA,
\$50 MILLION; DENMARK, \$30 MILLION, FRG, \$24 MILLION AND
NORWAY, \$23.5 MILLION. SWEDEN ALSO ANNOUNCED A LARGE
CONTRIBUTION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONFERENCE ELECTED, BY ACCLAMATION, SHIZUO SAITO
OF JAPAN AS ITS PRESIDENT AND IMRE HOLLAI OF HUNGARY AS
VICE PRESIDENT. THE PLEDGES, TOWARDS A TWO-YEAR, 1977-1978
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GOAL OF \$750 MILLION, WERE MADE AFTER GABRIEL VAN

LAETHEM, UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, EXPRESSED HOPE THAT COUNTRIES WOULD CONTRIBUTE CASH, COMMODITIES AND SERVICES TO MEET THE TARGET SET BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE CONFERENCE OF THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO). READING A MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM, VAN LAETHEM SAID THE WORLD PROGRAMME WAS NOW ENTERING A NEW PHASE AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INSTRUMENTS AVAILABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN ITS EFFORTS TO COPE WITH THE WORLD FOOD CRISIS AND HE THEREFORE ATTACHED THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PLEDGING CONFERENCE.. DONORS, REALIZING THAT THE TARGET FIGURE OF \$440 MILLION FOR 1975-1976 WHICH HAD BEEN FIRST PROPOSED IN EARLY 1973 WAS NO LONGER ADEQUATE IN LIGHT OF SUBSEQUENT PRICE DEVELOPMENTS, HAD MADE PLEDGES WHICH TO DATE AMOUNTED TO OVER \$600 MILLION AND WHICH HOPEFULLY WOULD REACH \$650 MILLION BEFORE THE END OF 1976. THE GENEROUS ACTION OF THE DONOR COUNTRIES WAS TESTIMONY TO THEIR CONCERN AS WELL AS OF THEIR CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN THE ABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THOSE SUFFERING FROM HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION. FURTHER TRIBUTE TO THE PROGRAMME'S ABILITY TO DEAL WITH CRISIS SITUATIONS HAD BEEN PAID BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHEN, AT ITS SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION IN SEPTEMBER 1975, IT HAD RECOMMENDED THAT DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN A POSITION TO DO SO SHOULD EARMARK STOCKS OR FUNDS TO BE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE PROGRAMME AS AN EMERGENCY RESERVE OF AT LEAST 500,000 TONS OF FOOD GRAINS.

3. IN ADDITION TO THE 43 DELEGATIONS WHICH MADE PLEDGES 11 DELEGATIONS INCLUDING A NUMBER OF PREVIOUS MAJOR DONORS (SUCH AS THE EEC, THE NETHERLANDS, AUSTRALIA, BELGIUM, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES) STATED THAT THEIR GOVERNMENT WERE NOT YET IN A POSITION TO ANNOUNCE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE 1977-1978 BIENNIAL.

4. MR. AQUINO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF WFP, SAID IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE WORLD COMMUNITY, TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ACHIEVE THE MINIMUM FOOD AID TARGET FOR GRAINS RECOMMENDED BY THE SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
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THE ENCOURAGING RECENT RESPONSE OF DONORS, MR AQUINO SAID, WAS A REFLECTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE AND OF THE POLITICAL WILL ON THE PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAMME IN ITS OBJECTIVE OF ASSISTING THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. SPEAKING OF WFP ACTIVITIES DURING 1975, HE SAID THAT NEW COMMITMENTS LAST YEAR HAD INCREASED MORE THAN THREEFOLD AND THAT MOST OF THE COMMODI-

TIES COMMITTED HAD ALREADY EITHER BEEN SHIPPED OR WERE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING SHIPPED. THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND THOSE MOST SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY ECONOMIC CRISIS HAD RECEIVED TOP PRIORITY IN THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES, GETTING 75 PERCENT OF ALL NEW COMMITMENTS. POINTING OUT THAT THE PLEDGING TARGET FOR 1977-1978 WAS \$750 MILLION, HE SAID THE TARGET, WHEN ATTAINED, WOULD ENABLE THE PROGRAMME TO DISBURSE ABOUT 900,000 TO 1 MILLION TONS OF FOODSTUFFS ANNUALLY, ASSUMING THAT THE CURRENT LEVEL OF COMMODITY PRICES CONTINUED. THE WFP DIRECTOR REMARKED THAT "NOTWITHSTANDING THE OVERWHELMING SUPPORT WHICH HAS BEEN EXPRESSED FOR THE CONCEPT OF MULTILATERALISM, BY SPEAKERS IN MANY INTERNATIONAL FORA, ONLY A RELATIVE HANDFUL OF DONORS STILL SHARE THE BURDEN OF CONTRIBUTING MORE THAN 90 PERCENT OF THE PROGRAMME'S RESOURCES.

5. MAJOR PLEDGES ANNOUNCED. AUSTRIA PLEDGED, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, THE AMOUNT OF \$3.74 MILLION. EUGENE WHELAN, THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE OF CANADA, ANNOUNCED ON BEHALF OF HIS GOVERNMENT, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, A PLEDGE OF \$100 MILLION CANADIAN FOR 1977-1978, WHICH HE SAID WAS MORE THAN DOUBLE ITS PLEDGE OF \$40 MILLION MADE FOR 1975-1976. IN ADDITION, HE ANNOUNCED A SUPPLEMENTARY PLEDGE FOR 1977 OF ADDITIONAL CEREAL GRAINS, BRINGING THE TOTAL OF REGULAR AND SUPPLEMENTARY GRAIN CONTRIBUTIONS TO 400,000 METRIC TONS, VALUED AT APPROXIMATELY \$45-50 MILLION. DENMARK, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, PLEDGED \$30 MILLION. THE FRG, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, PLEDGED \$24 MILLION. IRAN ANNOUNCED A CONTRIBUTION OF ONLY \$66,000 IN CASH TO THE PROGRAMME. THE IRAN DELEGATE SAID HIS COUNTRY'S CONTRIBUTION SHOULD BE VIEWED IN LIGHT OF IRAN'S OVERALL ASSISTANCE, TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IRELAND, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, PLEDGED UNCLASSIFIED

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\$2 MILLION. JAPAN PLEDGED \$7,500,000, AN INCREASE OF 25 PERCENT OVER ITS PREVIOUS CONTRIBUTION. NORWAY, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, WOULD CONTRIBUTE \$23.5 MILLION ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT RATE OF EXCHANGE. BAROODY OF SAUDI ARABIA PLEDGED \$50 MILLION IN CASH AND ADDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD THUS HAVE CONTRIBUTED \$100 MILLION TO WFP OVER FOUR YEARS. SWEDEN PLEDGED, SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL, \$19.6 MILLION TO THE REGULAR ACTIVITIES OF THE PROGRAMME IN 1977-1978. IN ADDITION THE SWEDISH DELEGATE SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTRIBUTE 35,000 TONS OF PROTEIN-ENRICHED WHEAT IN 1976-1977 AND IN 1977-1978. SWEDEN HAD COMMITTED ITSELF ALSO TO STOCKPILE UP TO 40,000 TONS OF WHEAT AND OTHER FOOD PRODUCTS FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIEF OPERATIONS. THE UNITED KINGDOM PLEDGED \$8.8 MILLION. SUBJECT TO PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL.

6. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, RICHARD E. BELL, PLEDGED A 188 MILLION CONTRIBUTION FROM THE UNITED STATES TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM(WFP). THE US PLEDGE REPRESENTS 25 PERCENT OF THE WFP'S \$750 MILLION 1977-78 BIENNIUM TARGET. BELL SAID " A NEW EMPHASIS IS BEING GIVEN TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WORLD FOOD STRATEGY AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT ALL NATIONS WILL EFFECTIVELY SUPPORT THIS EFFORT." CITING A US AID EMPHASIS ON REACHING THE NEEDIEST PEOPLE IN THE POOREST COUNTRIES, BELL CALLED ON THE WFP TO FOCUS GREATER ATTENTION ON HARD-TO-REACH WORLD POPULATIONS MOST LIKELY TO BE LEFT OUT OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS. THE US PLEDGE CONSISTS OF UP TO \$155 MILLION WORTH OF COMMODITIES, AND ADDITIONAL \$30 MILLION ESTIMATED AS THE COST OF SHIPPING ONE-HALF OF THE US PLEDGED COMMODITIES, AND A \$3 MILLION CASH CONTRIBUTION TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTION TO THE PROGRAM. THE \$188 MILLION PLEDGE REPRESENTS A 34 PERCENT INCREASE OVER THE \$140 MILLION US PLEDGE AT THE 1974-1975 BIENNIUM PLEDING CONFERENCE.
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